

Essential Health Benefits Coalition Statement on HHS Bulletin on Essential Benefits

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Neil Trautwein, chairman of the Essential Health Benefits Coalition and vice president and employee benefits policy counsel at the National Retail Federation, released the following statement on the release of a bulletin today by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the essential health benefits package:

"While the essential health benefits bulletin issued today by HHS allows for flexibility, the devil will be in the details. The bulletin leaves unanswered the question of affordability in the states. Employers, health plans, and state governments should have as much flexibility as possible in order to design and choose plans that are affordable and meet the needs of American families.

"HHS should continue to work to develop a rule that balances state-selected and reasonably comprehensive benefits with affordability for employers and individuals. A final rule that does otherwise will make health coverage more expensive for employers and individuals to purchase and make jobs more difficult for employers to create."

The Essential Health Benefits Coalition is a broad-based organization composed of groups representing large and small employers from various sectors of the U.S. economy, pharmacy benefit managers, and health plans operating in nearly every state. The growing membership of the coalition includes the National Retail Federation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Business, National Association of Manufacturers, National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, National Association of Health Underwriters, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, Retail Industry Leaders Association, Prime Therapeutics, America's Health Insurance Plans, ExpressScripts, Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, American Osteopathic Association and National Association of Dental Plans. To learn more, visit www.EHBCoalition.org.

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